



**December 4, 2003**

## **Four plead guilty in attempt to buy 50 kilograms of cocaine**

Four New York City area men have pleaded guilty in Providence to federal drug trafficking charges, admitting that they attempted to buy 50 kilograms of cocaine from undercover federal agents in June. A team of agents and detectives with the **High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force** arrested the four men in June at a location in Cranston where the defendants thought the deal was going to transpire.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty pleas, which were entered during separate hearings over the last several weeks before Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres. The last of the four, **Carlos Martinez**, 39, of 147-47 72 Road, Flushing, New York, pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiring to and attempting to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine.

Also pleading guilty to those charges:

- **Freddy Cardenas**, 48, of 126 Fernwood Terrace, Linden, New Jersey, on November 14;
- **Jorge Martinez**, 42, of 80-08 135<sup>th</sup> Street, Kew Gardens, New York, on October 31; and
- **Alvaro Pineda**, 48, of 43-26 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Sunnyside, New York, on October 21.

All four are detained in federal custody pending sentencing.

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At the plea hearings, Assistant U.S. Attorney Zechariah Chafee said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, in April at a Warwick restaurant, Pineda

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and Carlos Martinez began discussions about a 50-kilo cocaine deal with undercover agents out of the Boston FBI office.

On June 20, Pineda and Carlos Martinez met with the undercover agents at a fast food restaurant in Coventry and explained that they had \$100,000 in cash plus some property in Florida that they would offer as collateral for purchasing the cocaine. The deal was set for the following day.

On June 21, Carlos Martinez and Cardenas met with the undercover agents in a parking lot on Jefferson Boulevard. Pineda and Jorge Martinez subsequently arrived and showed the agents \$100,000 in cash that was hidden in the air bag compartment of their car. While Pineda and Jorge Martinez waited in the parking lot with the cash, Carlos Martinez and Cardenas went with the agents to a location in Cranston where the FBI had placed 60 kilograms of cocaine and where a team of agents was hiding in wait.

As Martinez and Cardenas began loading suitcases with kilogram packages of cocaine, the agents arrested them. Another team of agents arrested Pineda and Jorge Martinez in the parking lot where they were waiting.

Cardenas, who has a prior drug trafficking conviction, faces a minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum of life plus an \$8,000,000 fine. The other three defendants face a minimum of ten years imprisonment and a maximum of life plus a \$4,000,000 fine. The defendants' sentences will be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

The Boston office of the **Federal Bureau of Investigation** and the **Rhode Island Task Force** of the **New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area** investigated the case. The

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Task Force is led by the **FBI** and the **Rhode Island State Police**. Participating in the Task Force are detectives from the **Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, and Woonsocket Police Departments**. The **Rhode Island National Guard** provides administrative support to the HIDTA Task Force.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Chafee is prosecuting the case for the government.

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